WorkGroup: Ending Homelessness

STRATEGIC ISSUE:
1. Promote Transition to "Housing First" Orientation for Homeless Populations

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Create policy and financial incentives for shelter providers that will foster more rapid movement of people who are homeless into permanent housing, including:

   - Adopt and support consistent definitions/practices for "Housing First" and "Rapid Re-Housing"

   - Target or re-direct use of emergency shelter funding to support shift from "sheltering" to "interim emergency housing" and rapid relocation

2. Assure that adequate and appropriate supportive services are actively & accessibly linked to "housing first" options for homeless persons

3. Fund shelter-based and/or community-based homeless housing advocates to support rapid exit and successful re-housing

4. Implement a web-based Housing Locator to promote more rapid re-housing

5. Provide training and technical assistance to assist programs and communities in implementing "housing first" strategies.

6. Partner with public systems of care in assuring rapid re-housing for at-risk persons to prevent exit from institutions into homelessness (e.g., Department of Corrections & prisoner re-entry, Department of Human Services & youth aging out of foster care)

STRATEGIC ISSUE:
2. Increase Access to Existing Housing for Homeless and At-risk Populations

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Increase commitment of resources (federal, state, and local) that support access to existing housing through time-limited transitional supportive housing, including:

   - Transitional rent subsidies limited to not more than 24 months

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- Time-limited rent subsidies (up to 5 years) that gradually decline over time

2. Expand targeting of Housing Choice Vouchers to provide permanent housing subsidies for homeless populations, including:

- Creation of a feasible set-aside of both tenant-based and project-based vouchers from MSHDA

- Engagement of local Public Housing Agencies (PHA's) in targeting both tenant-based and project-based Housing Choice Vouchers

3. Expand housing opportunities in existing housing through creation and support of working partnerships with property owners/managers and implementation of pro-active eviction prevention strategies.

4. Develop strategies in support of housing-service partnerships that enable increased use of vacant units in federally subsidized developments

5. Develop strategies that assist homeless and at-risk households to overcome obstacles of poor credit, poor rental history and/or criminal history in applying for existing housing units

6. Address negative impacts of federal, state, and local policies that limit access to government-subsidized housing ~ i.e., discrimination against persons with history of substance abuse or criminal records

7. Explore the use of an escrow/revolving deposit fund for landlord damage guarantees (i.e., document effectiveness of models currently in place and identify potential funding sources)

STRATEGIC ISSUE:

3. Increase Housing Production Targeted to Homeless and At-Risk Populations

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Assure that housing created will be affordable to a broad array of extremely low-income households, including those who are dependent on public assistance, disability benefits or working at or below minimum wage

2. Identify and commit new revenue streams to be invested through the Michigan Affordable Housing & Community Development Fund, and assure that housing produced with these resources is targeted to people who are homeless as a priority.

3. Facilitate partnerships with the private sector to incentivize set-asides of affordable units for homeless populations within new housing under development.

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4. Develop models of supportive housing to be targeted to homeless sub-populations (in conjunction with strategies being developed through the "Supportive Housing" Workgroup), including:

5. Models designed for specific sub-populations (e.g. domestic violence, offenders, youth-in-transition)
6. Flexible models for persons who are most difficult to serve or engage (e.g., chronically homeless)

   a. Develop plans to promote local support for increasing production of affordable housing and/or supportive housing for homeless populations (e.g., adoption of inclusionary zoning, Payment In Lieu of Taxes, etc.)

7. Decrease regulatory barriers and streamline development processes to promote affordable housing for homeless populations

8. Explore the use of lower-cost housing technologies as a means to decrease the over-all cost of housing development (e.g., "straw houses", composite materials, "green" building, etc.)

STRATEGIC ISSUE:

4. Increase Access to Supportive Services for Homeless and At-Risk Populations

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Increase availability of service staffing targeted to achieving housing stabilization outcomes – both at agency & community level

2. Develop comprehensive and integrated community-based prevention systems, and assure that resources are available to support them

3. Increase income for homeless and at-risk populations by targeting workforce development resources and by linking supportive housing with employment supports

4. Develop strategies that assure appropriate and effective outreach and engagement services for hard to reach populations

5. Develop strategies that increase access to Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, and VA benefits for hard to engage populations

6. Increase access to broad array of essential services that support housing success and stabilization (e.g., credit repair, financial literacy, site-based case management, child care, and transportation supports)

7. Build on active cross-systems partnerships to assure access to services

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8. Support "braiding" and "blending" of State funding resources for more flexible/creative support of essential services

9. Adopt evidence-based strategies in providing housing success and stabilization services

10. Design homeless programs and services to address special challenges in serving rural populations

11. Enhance staff development and training that helps to motivate, retain, and improve performance of line workers in homeless services

12. Encourage federal, state and local funders to fund supportive services incorporated in affordable and supportive housing.

13. Identify and address policy barriers that prevent service agencies from delivering needed supports to assure housing stability (e.g., issues related to eligibility, etc.)

STRATEGIC ISSUE:

5. Invest in development of "systems infrastructure" in support of key activities for ending homelessness.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Assure full integration and implementation of recommendations emerging from Governor's Policy Academy on Homeless Families and Children

2. Assure that plans for ending homelessness are locally-focused, based on engagement of local stakeholders, and integrated with emerging local 10-Year Plans in addressing locally identified gaps

3. Establish use of common "housing status" indicators across all state agency data systems and statewide HMIS

4. Establish use of common outcomes measures for shelter, transitional housing, and supportive housing providers (regardless of targeted sub-populations), to be documented through HMIS

5. Develop cross-systems data management and analysis technologies to assist in documenting systems outcomes and promoting systems change

6. Establish common housing and service quality standards – and an associated monitoring/management plan – for emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing

Build public support and political will for ending homelessness through strategies identified